Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Jaylin Williams

Press Conference

Q. The last few years guys have come back individually better, but the team mostly seems to have been able to mostly kind of identify some big picture things to get better at, passing a couple years ago, physicality a few years ago. What's allowed the team to be able to take some of those big picture things and amplify it to the work in the off-season so that the whole is even better?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I think it falls back on the chemistry that our team has together. Like nobody's looking at themselves or -- of course everybody's trying to get better individually, but we want to get better as a whole. I think that when you have guys that are all working to get better as a whole, it puts you in the best position to get better as a whole.

Q. You evolved your game maybe more than anybody on the team since you've got to the NBA. A much more mobile defender, shots come a long way. What do you attribute all of that progress to?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Just work. Like I'm trying to get better. I feel like I'm still young, I'm 23, I feel like a lot of people forget I'm still young and like (laughing). I want to get better. I'm a competitor. I want to be on the court in tough situations, tough games. I want to be able to trust with my team and my coaches to put me in those tough situations.

In the summer I worked really hard. I lost a lot of weight this last summer because I wanted to get better. This summer I'm going to work just as hard to get better as well. So just work and work.

Q. What's next for you?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Honestly, I don't know. I haven't really thought that far ahead yet. I'm just honestly want to get better like as a whole. Continue to grow my game. I was guarded a lot different this year than I was in previous years, so I'll probably work towards getting better at getting guarded like that. I look at it, I'll watch film, I'll talk to my people, and we'll figure it out.

Q. What was it like to have someone that's as happy and smiles as Jared has been the last season?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: So when he first got on the team, I asked -- K-Rich and I asked everybody: Is this how I was? Like is this how y'all saw me? That was the first thing I said. But after awhile, like he's such a good dude and he can be in any situation. We can be right after we win a game, right after we lose a game, he's going to be smiling, he's going to be dancing. He's going to play his Olivia Dean in the shower and you can hear him singing in the shower, regardless of what it is.

So he's just a good dude. And when you have great people around like that, it's easy to come to work, it's easy to come and do the thing that you love.

Q. Coach said that's how you were?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, they did, but I don't agree with it. I don't agree that I was doing all that.

Q. You talked about him being able to come in and be himself off the floor and happy-go-lucky self. That kind of helped with his confidence on the floor. How much of you being around, seeing how you being able to be yourself, how much of that are you trying to make sure he saw to make sure he felt comfortable?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I will attribute it to the organization. Sam and our front office, they do a great job of putting great people in the building. So like I'm not even talking about the players. Like Matty, our media staff, like everybody in the building is great people. We love coming to work because you can joke around with these people. I make jokes with our strength coach that I probably have never made with any of my coaches my life.

So it's just like just things like that you enjoy coming in the building. And when you're surrounded by good people, surrounded by people that want to make you better and want to see you in the best position, it's easy to be yourself. We have such a great foundation here that's been built for a long time. It's just easy to be a great person and be a great player.

Q. You talked about Jalen being a warrior and playing through that wrist injury. How much more can you say about what he tried to go through this year?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, me and him talk about it all the time because I dealt with hamstring injuries, and it's really tough. It's really tough when you're a competitor and you want to be out there on the court, you want to help your team. And like for him to even go out there and try -- like a lot of people don't realize how hard that is. And I'm sure his hamstring was hurting really bad.

But like even just the mental side of it, of going out there and pushing yourself at the highest level possible, the NBA, the Western Conference Finals, and that mental block of knowing that your hamstring might get hurt again and getting past that little hurdle. So he's a warrior. We all wish he could have been out there with us longer, but we all commend him for everything that he did and how much he tried to get back out there.

Q. The off-season work, guessing you spent a lot of time (no microphone).

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Fayetteville.

Q. Either way, both you and Isaiah talked about going back to your home states and getting that work in. What is it about that that makes you guys want to always go back to home?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Honestly for me it's just like being here. It's our family. Everybody there, they're so polite and -- like I don't know. It's just small stuff that I notice like people holding the door open for you when you're walking in somewhere. Things like that. They treat us like normal people there. And these people have seen us grow up, they've seen us at the Boys & Girls Club, they've seen us at every level of our game.

So it's not like they're treating us because of where we are today and who we are today. They're treating us like that because that's how they have always treated us. So just going back home, going back to where we're comfortable and familiar is always easy. Just it's our family. It's where we're from.

Q. Is there anything specific that you want to work on to get better at or another aspect of your game that you want to open up?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I mean, all of my game, really. I just want to be better. Just be a better player. I talked to Mark maybe two years ago, and one of the things he told me was players often try to strengthen their weaknesses instead of strengthening their strengths. And I feel like going into the summer, that's always been my mindset, just continue to strengthen my strength.

So that being shooting, defense, just being loud, I want to become a better shooter. With guys guarding me tighter, having guards guard me, shots aren't going to be as open anymore. So I have to continue to get better at shooting and doing those small things. Just growing the things I'm good at is going to be my focus this summer.

Q. You're obviously known for taking charges in your career. Do you ever get caught in between what you need to do?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Not really. Here and there. Sometimes I have relapses, just trying to take charges of everything. But, no, we watched a lot of film on it, on me taking too many charges my rookie year. Of course we're playing against better athletes and playing against faster, more athletic, taller guys. So smarter guys that aren't going to just run into me and give me a charge.

So I've definitely tried to become better at being vertical and blocking shots and doing things like that. And also me losing a lot of weight also helped me in that aspect of my game. So just in watching film and that's helped me with that part of it.

Q. Anything you learned from the Spurs series? Seven games, anything that you can take with you into the offseason?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I wouldn't say there's anything -- like, I mean there's nobody else in the League that's seven foot whatever he is. So it's just a different guard, guarding him. It's a way different coverage. It's different than guarding whoever else is in the NBA.

So there's not a lot to take from that, other than just when I played them. But just the compete level. Honestly, just competing at a high level. We were watching a clip on film and it was like me picking Wemby up, like one step past half court. And I looked at K-Rich and I said that's the furthest I've ever picked somebody up.

Just that part of my game, just trying to become a better defender, just growing all aspects of my game and expanding it. That's something new. I never picked somebody up that high. I picked up full court dang near and just continue growing that part of it, just become a better defender.

Q. You've been called the other Jaylin Williams a lot and then this post-season seems like a lot of people

say, it's not the other Jaylin Williams anymore. What do you think that you actually proved yourself and to the national media what you can do?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm not seeking approval from anybody. I mean, it's just people talking. It doesn't matter to me what they call me. I've been called way worse in my life. I've been called way worse the past 12 hours. But, I mean, I don't seek approval. I don't really care what they call me. My teammates call me J-Will, my family call me Jay. People I love, they call me by my name. At the end of the day, that's all that matters to me. My teammates, like, I don't care about anybody else what they call me, really, that's it.

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